

Labor Hall of Fame

F 21

Samuel Gompers

John R. Commons

Frances Perkins

Cyrus S. Ching

George Meany

John L. Lewis

A. Philip Randolph

James P. Mitchell

Henry J. Kaiser

Eugene V. Debs

Robert F. Wagner

Walter P. Reuther

L 1. 2:



best copy available

The Labor Hall of Fame honors posthumously those Americans whose distinctive contributions to the field of labor have enhanced the quality of life of millions yesterday, today and for generations to come. ...Americans who, through their achievements, have done the most to implement the mandate of the U.S. Department of Labor, "...to foster, promote and develop the welfare of the wage earners of the United States, to improve their working conditions and to advance their opportunities for profitable employment."

Friends of the Department of Labor is proud to sponsor the Labor Hall of Fame as one of its continuing projects in support of the U.S. Department of Labor.

FDL is a non-profit, non-partisan, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization.

Exhibit Hours - Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Group tours by appointment. For further information and reservations, call (202) 371-6422.

*Hall of Fame portraits
by Dana Van Horn
and Donald Gates*

1988 HONOREE

Samuel Gompers 1850-1924



"To be free, the workers must have choice. To have choice they must retain in their own hands the right to determine under what conditions they will work."

Samuel Gompers was a cigar-maker who, in 1886, became the first president of the newly-formed American Federation of Labor. He established the pattern of labor's struggles for improved working conditions. Often against the wishes of more radical elements of the labor movement, Gompers favored indigenous approaches to workers' problems, preferring to operate within American institutions rather than in opposition to them.

Samuel Gompers.

1988 HONOREE

John R. Commons
1862-1945



"This is the first great problem of modern democracy...how to get a fair living by reasonable hours of work leaving enough leisure for both childhood and manhood."

Professor John R. Commons of the University of Wisconsin was a creative force behind innovative concepts of social legislation involving trade unionism and collective bargaining. Commons was known as the "spiritual father" of Social Security. Virtually all progressive social and labor legislation enacted in this century can be attributed to him or to those students and colleagues he inspired.

A handwritten signature of John R. Commons in cursive script.

1988 HONOREE

Frances Perkins
1880-1965



"I came to Washington to work for God, FDR and the millions of forgotten, plain common workingmen."

Frances Perkins became Secretary of Labor during the Great Depression when there were 13 million jobless — one quarter of the workforce. She moved quickly to help create and administer landmark legislation to lead the Nation out of its economic paralysis, including establishment of the U.S. Employment Service, a law guaranteeing the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively, and the establishment of a minimum wage for the neediest. But most important of all, Frances Perkins directed the formulation and enactment of the Social Security Act — perhaps the most important piece of social legislation in U.S. history.

A handwritten signature of Frances Perkins in cursive script.

1988 HONOREE

Cyrus S. Ching
1876-1967



"I believe...very firmly and sincerely that free collective bargaining can be used as one of the great cornerstones of our democratic institutions."

Cyrus S. Ching was an enlightened industrialist who translated his concepts of human relationships into beneficial and productive labor-management relationships. At a formative period in American labor relations, Cy Ching established a pattern of constructive cooperation with the employees. His wisdom and creativity prompted President Truman to name him the first director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cy Ching".

1989 HONOREE

George Meany
1894-1980



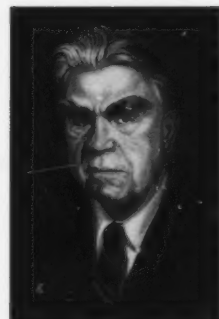
"The basic goal of labor will not change. It is...to better the standards of life for all who work for wages and to seek decency and justice and dignity for all Americans."

As head of the American labor movement for over a quarter of a century, George Meany was a towering figure of strength and integrity — organized labor's most influential force on the national scene. A leader in the fight for labor unity, he became the first president of the merged AFL and CIO. As a steadfast voice for the common good, he led the struggle for improved social security, unemployment insurance, work safety and health, medical care and housing. On the world stage he was an implacable foe of totalitarianism from both the left and the right, and personified for millions the image of free American trade unionism.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George Meany".

1989 HONOREE

John L. Lewis
1880-1969



*"I have pleaded
(labor's) case, not in the
quavering tones of a
feeble mendicant asking
alms, but in the
thundering voice of the
captain of a mighty
host, demanding the
rights to which free men
are entitled."*

A colossus of American labor, John L. Lewis was an eloquent spokesman for working people throughout the U.S. President of the United Mine Workers for over four decades, he won for his members the highest wages of any of the major industries of the period, and one of the first employer-paid health and retirement systems. A strong proponent of industrial unionism, he revitalized the U.S. labor movement in the thirties with the formation of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, bringing hundreds of thousands of workers into the new CIO. The controversial John L. Lewis was one of the most admired, feared, effective and colorful trade unionists in American history.

A stylized, handwritten signature of John L. Lewis in dark ink.

1989 HONOREE

A. Philip Randolph
1889-1979



*"Freedom is never
granted: it is won.
Justice is never given:
it is exacted. Freedom
and justice must be
struggled for by the
oppressed of all lands
and races...."*

Acknowledged as the greatest black labor leader in American history, A. Philip Randolph founded the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and pioneered in advancing racial equality within the labor movement. He was ever in the forefront of campaigns to improve wages and working conditions for black and white alike. As a long-time crusader for civil rights, he pressured President Roosevelt to order an end to discrimination in war industries and President Truman to ban discrimination in federal employment and the armed services. The chairman of the 1963 March on Washington, he fought for the oppressed of all races with a strict adherence to democratic principles.

A stylized, handwritten signature of A. Philip Randolph in dark ink.

1989 HONOREE

James P. Mitchell
1900-1964



"It is intolerable and indecent for a society to produce by overworking and underpaying human beings."

In both business and government, James P. Mitchell was a staunch advocate of human relations and the practice of constructive collective bargaining based on genuine concern for the worker. An active supporter of civil rights, he led in efforts to raise the minimum wage, aid the migrant worker, extend skills training among the workforce, and in assuring the integrity of the labor-management process. A caring person, he brought warmth and openness to his office, and was honored by both Labor Department employees and trade union leaders at the end of his administration.

1990 HONOREE

Henry J. Kaiser
1882-1967



"I always have to dream up there against the stars. If I don't dream I'll make it, I won't even get close."

He rose from obscurity in the finest rags-to-riches tradition to become a world-renowned entrepreneur. Henry J. Kaiser was a builder of roads, dams, ships and housing. He established giant businesses in cement, aluminum, chemicals, steel, tourism and health care. His many projects put thousands to work during the depression of the thirties and his massive shipbuilding during World War II was a decisive factor in winning the war. A "can-do" capitalist, he was still fair and equitable with his employees, worked freely and cooperatively with their unions and earned the everlasting respect and admiration of the trade union movement.

1990 HONOREE

Eugene V. Debs
1855-1926



"Years ago I recognized my kinship with all living things, and I made up my mind that I was not one bit better than the meanest on earth. . . . While there is a lower class, I am in it, while there is a criminal element, I am of it, and while there is a soul in prison, I am not free."

Labor leader, radical, Socialist, presidential candidate, Eugene Victor Debs was a homegrown American original. He formed the American Railway Union, led the Pullman strike of the 1890's in which he was jailed, and emerged a dedicated Socialist. An idealistic, impassioned fighter for economic and social justice, he was brilliant, eloquent and eminently human. As a "radical" he fought for women's suffrage, workmen's compensation, pensions and social security—all commonplace today. Five times the Socialist candidate for president, his last campaign was run from a federal prison where he garnered almost a million votes.

A stylized, cursive signature of Eugene V. Debs, written in dark ink.

1990 HONOREE

Robert F. Wagner
1877-1953



"Of what use are material resources . . . if the sum total of human happiness enjoyed by all our people be not increased thereby?"

From an impoverished immigrant childhood to the exalted realm of the United States Senate where he crafted laws on behalf of society's neediest, Robert F. Wagner embodied the American dream. His pioneering legislation gave us hope during the depression of the thirties—emergency relief, employment assistance, jobless help, aid for farmers, Social Security and, most importantly, labor's Magna Carta, the Wagner Act, guaranteeing workers the right to organize and bargain collectively. The author of early national housing legislation, he also fought for civil rights laws in advance of his time.

A stylized, cursive signature of Robert F. Wagner, written in dark ink.

1990 HONOREE

Walter P. Reuther
1907-1970



*"There is no greater
calling than to serve
your fellow man.
There is no greater
satisfaction than to
have done it well."*

A fiery visionary of economic and social reform, Walter P. Reuther built the United Automobile Workers into one of the most militant and progressive unions in American history. He set new standards in collective bargaining yet saw the labor movement not as a narrow special interest group but in the broader context of the entire community. He was an unceasing fighter for civil rights, improved health care, affordable housing, the environment and free, democratic trade unionism throughout the world.

Walter P. Reuther

**Friends of the
Department of Labor**

Chairman

W. J. Usery, Jr.

Vice Chairman

Richard F. Schubert

Board of Directors

Morton Bahr

Ben Burdetsky

William J. Kilberg

William H. Kolberg

Betty Southard Murphy

Stephen I. Schlossberg

George L-P Weaver

Senior Advisors

W. Willard Wirtz

George P. Shultz

James D. Hodgson

Peter J. Brennan

John T. Dunlop

W. J. Usery, Jr.

Ray Marshall

Raymond J. Donovan

William E. Brock

Ann McLaughlin

Elizabeth Dole

**Senior Executive
Committee**

J. Vernon Ballard

Mary P. Durkin

Richard E. Miller

Labor Department

Liaison

James F. Taylor

Executive Director

Richard Conn



Friends of the
Department of Labor
Box 2258
Washington, D.C. 20013
(202) 371-6422

Your Membership is Invited
\$25 individual \$40 couple
\$250 organizational